

424: SIMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER

As time elapsed the attitude of the Clericals became yet more pronounced. Pope Leo XIII made advances to the French Republic. From his standpoint they may have been sincere; but in any case they tended to the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church in France. On their side, the French Reactionaries, clergy and religious orders as well as laymen, could not give any frank and loyal support to the papal policy such as it was publicly stated to be, for it was foreign to their ideas, sympathies, and aspirations. If they made some outward show of acquiescence, this was only with the secret object of obtaining the mastery by feigning friendship and afterwards destroying the Republican *regime*. But the Republic of 1848 was not forgotten; the clergy had then adhered to the new order of things the better to strangle it; and thus, in spite of all the fair words of Leo XIII and the protestations of those who professed that they had rallied to the Republic in all sincerity, the more clear-sighted ^Republicans, like the advanced Eadicals and the Socialists, remained full of distrust. Some years elapsed before matters really took shape. At first, indeed, the Pope merely coquetted with the Republic, reserving a formal pronouncement of his adhesion until an apparently decisive moment, and the clergy worked somewhat stealthily, assisted by those university men and others

who abetted or
accepted the *retour offensif* of mysticism in
literature. Then,
as time went by, the residue of the Boulangist
party raised
its head to propound various theories of
Nationalism, Milita-
rism, and anti-Parliamentarism, to the last of
which the
Panama scandals lent some force. For many
years, un-
doubtedly, the trend of the masses had been
towards free
thought, but the sentiments of Nationalism and
Ghauvinisme